

PROPOSED AMENDMENT
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Amendments

In the Specification

On page 15, first paragraph, please delete that paragraph and insert the following paragraph:

"FIG. 3 is a block diagram view of an embodiment of the system for combined mailing (co-mailing) of a plurality of diverse publications of the present invention. In FIG. 3, two major subsystems are shown: (1) bindery systems 300, 303 . . . N; and (2) a co-mailer system 326. Beginning at the bindery systems 300 and 303, a plurality of binderies 315, 316 . . . N are shown. It is noted that the number of binderies may vary in the system for co-mailing the plurality of publications and, in one embodiment, may have anywhere from two to thirty binderies in order to bind up to thirty diverse publications. Thus, in FIG. 3, bindery 315 may be considered, in one embodiment, a first bindery and bindery 316 may be a second bindery. It is noted that the diverse publications may also be bound [[a]] by a single bindery. Publications are understood to mean any bound, printed matter including, but not limited to, magazines, catalogs, periodicals, books, and the like. A plurality of binderies 315, 316 . . . N therefore exists in a typical printing facility that create and prepare for mailing a plurality of publications. The binderies 315, 316 may be any standard binderies, for example, the Müller Martini Prim Saddle Stitcher bindery manufactured by Müller Martini of Zufingen, Switzerland and described in the publication "the Prima Saddle Stitcher – Fast Makedreddy and High Output for Maximum Production Flexibility" dated October of 1995, and incorporated herein by reference. It is therefore understood that while the embodiment of FIG. 3 depicts two bindery systems 300, 303 for binding two publications (A, B), other

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embodiments may contain more binderies (and bindery systems), or even the same two binderies where those two binderies bind more than two publications.”

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~~unique order to mail the plurality of diverse publications to the plurality of recipients; and~~
a sortation device for receiving the plurality of diverse publications merged by the merge stream and sorting each of the plurality of diverse publications by a mail rate at the optimized mail rate.

The Mayer Reference does not teach or disclose the sortation device of amended claim 1 that receives the individual publications from the merge stream and sorts each of the publications by mail rate. The Mayer Reference has no sortation device after the stacked publications are placed on a conveyer. Rather, the Mayer Reference teaches accumulating the publications onto co-mailing line 28 (FIG. 4), where the publications are fed onto the co-mailing line 28 in a co-mailing stack 40 (the co-mailing stack 40 formed by those publications having common zip code or carrier route (Col. 7, l. 67 – Col. 8, l. 3)). The co-mailing stack 40 is then fed directly into a strapping device 48 (Col. 8, ll. 27-37), without any sorting after placing the publications on the conveyer since the publications are in a stack. An additional embodiment of the Mayer Reference, shown in FIG. 3, shows the publications stacked into pallets 52 and merged on the co-mailing line 28', again as a stack. Thus, both embodiments of FIGs. 4 and 5 of the Mayer Reference depict a co-mailer that merges stacks of publications already in a mail rate order, rather than individual publications that remain to be sorted by mail rate by a sortation device.

In contrast, the present co-mailer, as claimed, calls for a "sortation device for receiving the plurality of diverse publications merged by the merge stream and sorting each of the plurality of diverse publications by a mail rate." This difference permits the present co-mailer to decrease mail rates paid since the sortation device allows the publications to be sorted singularly (as opposed to being in a stack). This singular sortation, in turn, permits

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